THE VIRTUOUS WIFE OF BRISTOL.

TEWKESBURY:
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THE

Virtuous Wife of Briſtol.

COME all ye huſbands lewd and bold,
Who after wanton love do ſtray;
Be kind unto your loving wives,
And a warning take by this I pray.

In Briſtol city late did dwell,
A creature bleſs'd with beauty bright,
She married to a merchant was,
In whom ſhe fix'd her hearts delight.

Ten thouſand pounds her fortune was,
But a ſhort time ſhe had been wed,
But by a wicked ſtrumpet baſe,
He was enticed from her bed.

Whole nights he from his wife did go,
She in his abſence made great moan,
And ſaid, I am unfortunate,
For the man I prize is from me flown.

He for his wanton harlot did
A gilded coach ſtraitway provide;
Cloathed with robes of ſilver bright,
With footmen running by her ſide.

While this diſtreſſed lady ſhe,
Was robbed of all her worldly ſtore;
Becauſe the worſt of huſbands he
Unto her grief did add the more.

He made his gold and ſilver fly,
His wanton miſtreſs to obtain;
And when he had his ſubſtance ſpent,
Home to his wife he'd go again.

He plundered her both night and day,
His wanton pleaſures to fulfill;
For her arguments were but in vain,
When ſhe found he would have his will.

She ſaid, My dear and hearts delight,
Alas! what have I done to thee?
That you forſake my beauty bright,
For a wanton harlot's company.

My fortune great which I did bring,
On her you conſtant do beſtow;
You muſt ſoon come to poverty,
If in this courſe of life you go.

He ſaid, Your words are but in vain,
I can no more adore your charms:
She is the phenix of the world,
I have no reſt but in her arms.

Go wicked huſband, moſt unkind!
In lawleſs love to ſpend your time;
You never can find a heart ſo true,
As you have found this heart of mine.

When that your riches now in ſtore
Are gone you can no comfort find,
In her you do ſo much adore,
A harlot's love is like the wind.

Some other ſpark ſhe will admire,
Who can maintain her rich and gay:
Your darling creature you may ſee
Before your face the wanton play.

Three hundred pounds he then did take,
From her with jewels rich and bright,
With chryſtal tears bedewed her cheeks,
She patiently bid him good night.

He to his wanton miſtreſs goes,
And ſhew'd to her the golden ſtore:
She ſaid, Now ſtay with me my dear,
And when it's gone we will get more.

His lady to her parents went,
And told them her wretched caſe:
They kindly took their daughter home,
That they her ſubſtance might not waſte.

But ſhe no reſt then could take,
Her huſband run ſo in her mind;
Reſolving now ſome prank to play,
If ſhe could make him be more kind.

Five hundred guineas then ſhe took,
And from her fathers houſe did ſtray:
Her female dreſs ſhe quite forſook,
And cloath'd herſelf in man's array.

Her dreſs her perſon did diſguiſe,
So much that no one did her know;
Rich ſcarlet overlaid with gold,
She appeared like a handſome beau.

So to the place away did go,
Where with his miſtreſs he did dwell,
And in the houſe a lodging took,
Which being ſtated to her will.

She for a wealthy merchant went:
He ſoon with her acquainted were;
He often kept her company,
But little thought his love was there.

He more and more did take delight,
In the young merchant's company:
The harlot thinking her a man,
On her did caſt a wanton eye.

Perceiving ſhe had riches ſtore,
Reſolves her golden bait to lay;
Unto her love ſhe bid adieu,
Becauſe his riches did decay.

Now the diſguiſed lady ſeeing this,
Did oft frequent her company;
She to this ſtrumpet ſoon made love,
And told her if ſhe would deny

That ſpark when in her company,
And yield your charms. ſhe ſaid, to me,
In robes of gold I'll cloath my girl,
Like a lady of high degree.

She then put on her coldeſt look,
Of high diſdain, upon her dear,
Becauſe his pocket were poor and low,
Cries ſhe, 'tis time now to take care.

Cries ſhe, Your whole eſtate is gone,
You ſaid your wife you could not find;
You're like to poverty, to fall,
It is time for me myſelf to mind.

I muſt be kept in rich array,
Go get your money where you can:
Or elſe you may be ſure that I
Muſt ſoon incline lo other men.

Cries he, My joy my hearts delight,
Some hundreds I have ſpent of thee,
I did forſake my loving bride,
Don't ſcorn me in my poverty.

What would you have me do? ſhe cry'd,
Pray do not weary out my life,
The beſt friend you can apply to,
I truly think it is your wife.

So from him ſhe in a paſſion flew,
Crying, I beg come here no more:
So then he thought upon his wife,
For nothing's baſer than a whore.

My marriage vows I ſure have broke,
I ſlighted her who did me adore,
I wronged wife and babys ſweet,
Now heaven ſcourges me therefore.

Then did he wander up and down,
But knew not where to find his wife:
All his friends forſook his company,
Being weary of his wretched life.

Once more he to his miſtreſs goes,
Where he before his eyes did ſee,
The female merchant, and his dear,
Who ſaid to him moſt ſcornfully.

Why do you teaze me thus ſhe ſaid,
You'll ſoon go in a tatter'd dreſs,
This is the man whom I adore,
So roſe and gave her ſpark a kiſs.

The female merchant in diſguiſe,
Your ſuit you now muſt caſt aſide,
For why within a day or two.
I intend to make this girl my bride.

But if to-morrow you will come,
A bargain with you I will make,
And have the writings fairly drawn,
That you her company forſake.

And if that you are in diſtreſs,
The things that to her you gave,
Your jewels, rings, and coſtly robes
I do intend that you ſhall have.

A chariot then of ſhining gold,
Six ſteeds that are whiter then ſnow,
I do intend to buy my girl,
To draw her beauty to and fro.'

She ſhall be deck'd in diamonds bright,
The richeſt from the Indian ſhore,
I will beſtow upon my dear,
She ſhall return to you your ſtore.

The ſtrumpet then to this agreed,
To part with all her treaſure bright,
And ſaid, We'll not ſtay another day,
For the writings ſhall be drawn to night,

This pleas'd the lady in diſguiſe,
So for a lawyer they did ſend,
And madam fetch'd down all the things,
Thinking ſhe'd got a better friend.

Rich coſtly rings and jewels bright,
Down on the table ſhe did lay,
And cloaths of fine brocaded ſilk,
Which from his wife he'd took away.

She ſaid, Now take away this gear,
Let me be plagu'd with it no more;
This man be ſure did love me well,
When he intic'd me for his whore.

The virtuous wife at this did ſmile,
But gallants all now lend an ear,
Thus cunningly ſhe did beguile
She that her huſband did enſnare.

The writings being fairly drawn,
He takes up all the golden ſtore;
He ſaid, I'll ſeek my virtuous wife,
You are welcome ſir, to wed my whore.

Baſe villian, madam then did ſay,
And ſtraitway at his face ſhe flew,
I ſoon will be a merchant's wife,
And a whore I'll be no more to you.

Then ſaid his wife, where will you go,
Now you have got ſome riches ſtore:
He ſaid I'll ſeek my loving wife,
And her for ever will adore.

Then to the ſtrumpet's great ſurpriſe,
Into her huſbands arms ſhe flew,
Saying, Now ſorrow is at an end,
Here is your wife that ſtill is true.

I am thy dear and loving wife,
Diſguiſed thus to follow thee;
I hope your eyes are open now,
And ſee a harlot's treachery.

He claſp'd his arms about her waiſt,
Crying, My love, I know thy eyes.
The ſtrumpet ſaid, I'll have my cloaths,
But his dear wife then anſwer'd, no.

For theſe things you know are mine,
I'll leave you ragged, poor and bare,
For you ſhall now partake, you jade,
Of the fate you made him to ſhare.

A conſtable was likewiſe call'd,
Unto bridewell madam was ſent;
He with his loving wife went home,
And now they live in ſweet content.

In bridewell now the ſtrumpet lies,
Lamenting her unhappy caſe,
All married men adore your wives,
Leſt a harlot bring you to diſgrace.